

THE OKLAHOMAN

'It is a horrible day for us'

Gunman kills at least 17 at Florida school

BY TERRY SPENCER
AND KELLI KENNEDY
Associated Press

PARKLAND, FLA. — A former student is accused of opening fire with a semi-automatic rifle at a Florida high school Wednesday, killing at least 17

people and sending hundreds of students fleeing into the streets in the nation's deadliest school shooting since a gunman attacked an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut. The shooter, who was equipped with a gas mask

and smoke grenades, set off a fire alarm to draw students out of classrooms shortly before the day ended at one of the state's largest schools, officials said. Authorities offered
SEE SCHOOL, 2A



Students released from a lockdown embrace after the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. on Wednesday. (PHOTO BY JOHN MCCALL/SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL VIA AP)



An Honor Guard stands at attention Wednesday to welcome home the remains of WW II and Korean War Army veteran Alfred Bensinger Jr. at Will Rogers World Airport. (PHOTO BY CHRIS LANDSBERGER, THE OKLAHOMAN)



Army Sgt. Alfred Bensinger during his service.

BY MATT PATTERSON
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An Army honor guard carried the casket containing the remains of Army Sgt. First Class Alfred Bensinger into a waiting white hearse Wednesday at Will Rogers World Airport, a solemn homecoming decades in the making for the Korean War POW.

As the Delta Air Lines MD-88 carrying Bensinger taxied to its airport gate, fire trucks fired their water cannons over the jet in his honor. A TSA color guard stood at attention. Passengers watching from upstairs inside

the terminal removed their hats. Oklahoma Highway Patrol motorcycle officers and a phalanx of Patriot Guard Riders then escorted him from the airport to Smith and Turner Mortuary in Yukon where a short ceremony honoring POWs was held. Gary Clayton estimates he last saw his father when he was 2. He has no memory of him, and has struggled throughout his life with how he feels about a man he never knew. "He disappeared in my life when I was 3 years old," Clayton said. "Much later I found out what happened to him and the chances of him coming back were slim to none. I go through

my life with someone who I always said had no meaning to me because I never knew him. As I progressed and got older, I realized that wasn't true. There is still an amazingly strong connection there." Born in Oklahoma City, Bensinger served in the 2nd Engineer Combat Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division in Korea. In the fall of 1950, his unit found itself withdrawing through a mountain pass as the Chinese army pursued them. The 2nd Engineer Battalion held the enemy off long enough for other troops to evacuate, but
SEE HOME, 2A

STATE BUDGET Revenues surpassed estimates last month

BY DALE DENWALT
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Oklahoma's improving economy has resulted in \$122 million more tax dollars than estimated coming into the state's General Revenue Fund during the first seven months of the current fiscal year. That's good, but it doesn't mean agency budget cuts can be avoided, state finance officials say. Under Oklahoma's constitution, state lawmakers are only allowed to spend 95 percent of projected revenues during the fiscal year that the revenues come into the treasury, said Shelley Zumwalt, spokeswoman for the Office of Management and Enterprise Services. Any amount above that can't be tapped until future fiscal years, she said. So, after the reconciliation of FY 2018, the earliest the Legislature could appropriate those funds would be for FY 2019 supplemental appropriations or use in fiscal year 2020. The General Revenue Fund is the main fund that the Legislature uses to appropriate money to state agencies. The state has taken \$3.3 billion in taxes into its General Revenue Fund during the first seven months of the current fiscal year. That is 3.9 percent over projections that were used to make the budget and \$369 million, or 12.7 percent, more than the amount collected during the same time period last year. January contributed to the positive trend, with \$596 million coming into the fund, which was \$47.2 million above the monthly estimate and \$90.8 million more than was taken in during January of 2017.
SEE REVENUE, 3A

Ash Wednesday services held

Oklahoma's faithful flocked to churches as they joined others around the world in observing Ash Wednesday, which marks the first day of the Christian season of Lent. The ritual of the imposition of ashes traditionally takes place during Ash Wednesday services. Ashes from palm branches are placed on the forehead of con-

gregants in the sign of the cross as part of this ritual. The ashes are christened with holy water and they symbolize penance and contrition. The words "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return" remind believers of their mortality — that they are on Earth for a short time.

FROM STAFF REPORTS



Rev. John Henry Marlin, assisting priest at All Souls' Episcopal Church, places ashes in the form of a cross on the foreheads of parishioners — the imposition of ashes — at an Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday at the church, 6400 N Pennsylvania. (PHOTO BY NATE BILLINGS, THE OKLAHOMAN)

TODAY'S PRAYER
Dear God, aid those who suffer from addiction to lead clean, sober lives. Amen.

Business	1C	Life	1D
Classified	1E	Opinion	8A
Comics	6E	Sports	1B
Deaths	6A	Stocks	5C

Weather, 6C
LOW CLOUDS
H: 78 L: 30

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